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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the people of Hermiston and Athena for their unabashed love for their cities.

Civic pride is part of what makes small towns special, and we see it across Eastern Oregon every day. But two recent examples in Umatilla County deserve special commendation.

In Hermiston, an “I Love My City” campaign on a Saturday in late September was coordinated by the Assembly of God church, and offered free car washes, water bottles and a neighborhood party. It was in direct response to a late summer murder-suicide in the city that took the lives of three people, including a 14-year-old member of the church. But the message was much broader. It was that Hermiston is a town worth loving, especially in its dark days.

In Athena, citizens are rallying to pump a little more life into their downtown. One idea is to buy the shuttered Pendleton Grain

Growers general store building and make it available to small businesses, whether that be a brewery, hardware store or multi-use space. The group gathered last week even committed \$11,000 to the cause on the spot.

Meanwhile, the Athena Mainstreet Association is looking to commission a mural for the blank canvas of a wall of the town’s grocery store.

These are but two recent examples of spontaneously generated community spirit, but a good reminder to everyone that loving your town can take many forms and come from many places. It just takes intentional action by people willing to embrace positivity rather than settling for simple apathy or even negative derision.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.



OTHER VIEWS

Measure 98 can help reduce Oregon dropouts

The Oregonian/OregonLive

In the struggle to find what works educationally, and to fund programs that are winners, Oregon loses. The state’s graduation rate, among the worst in the nation, means about 10,000 young Oregonians drop out or fail to complete high school on time every year. Who are these students? And what becomes of them?

They are young people who couldn’t quite find their way and found high school to be fruitless or overwhelming.

Upon dropping out or finishing late, they typically struggle to find home and a job and, perhaps, a family. Engaged citizenship? Survival comes first. Like the education system that somehow failed to engage them, these young people lose: in their failure to find work and, if requiring social services down the line, in becoming society’s burden.

Few numbers are more chilling than those furnished by the Oregon Employment Department. Young people from 16 to 24 years of age in 2015 made up 12 percent of the state’s labor force yet accounted for 27 percent of the state’s unemployed. On the flip side of the equation, significantly, are Oregon industries that profess not to be able to find the right skilled workers when they have jobs available.

Oregon has tried to fix this, though the number of high school career technical education programs statewide plunged from 1,202 in the academic year 1999-2000 to 690 in 2014-2015. Projections, despite a hopping economy, are grim. The Portland research firm ECONorthwest calculates that the state’s on-time graduation rate will notch up only four percentage points between now and 2029. That means 1 in 5 students starting kindergarten in Oregon this year will fail to graduate from high school at all or on time.

The Class of 2029 will deliver to Oregon a swollen cohort of undereducated, struggling citizens whose likely prospect will be

to lose, holding themselves and Oregon back.

Measure 98 stands a solid chance at turning this around. It requires no new taxes but would direct the Legislature to add to the K-12 budget revenue to be used exclusively for career technical training, dropout prevention efforts and access to college-level courses. It works out to \$800 per student, but local school districts would have to apply for the money and

then decide how to fashion qualifying programs that meet local needs. The state’s Department of Education would be charged with doling out the money and tracking results.

Nothing’s a sure bet. Accountability will be everything. The measure leans on the secretary of state to conduct financial and program audits

of the spending and to gauge effectiveness of the effort. Good. But it will be essential that both the DOE and the secretary of state are in sync in their attempts to clearly align student success or failure with the underwritten programs. The burden of reporting on participating school districts, meanwhile, must be to accurately track student attendance — again, with an eye to correlating such data with participation in funded programs and, ultimately, graduation.

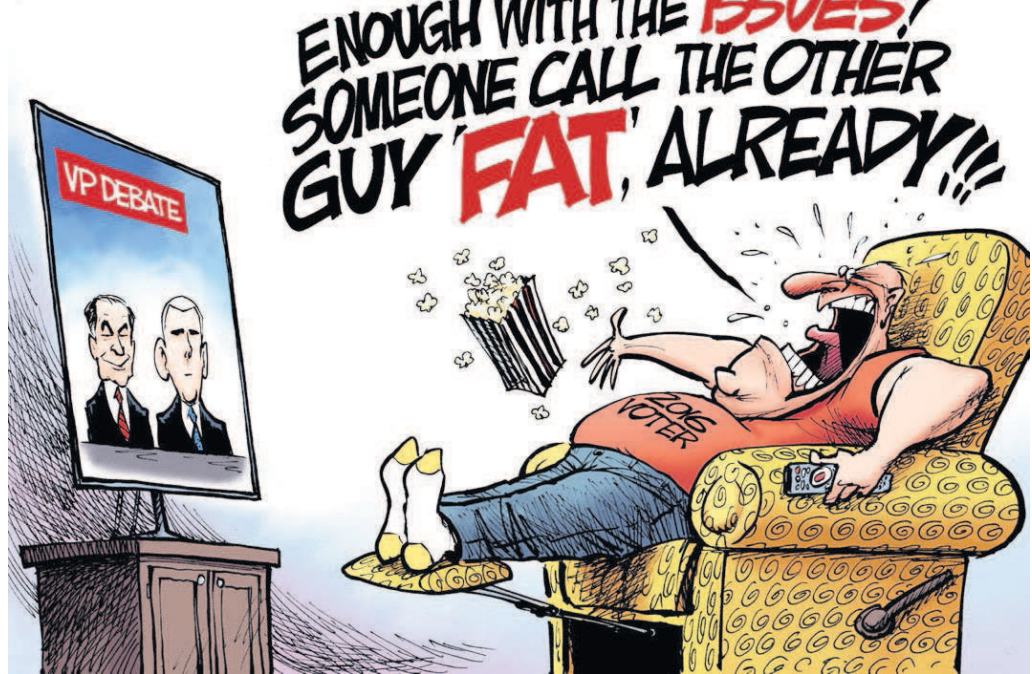
Budgeting by ballot measure can be risky. It constrains the Legislature in balancing a budget entirely of its own devising. But the fortunes of high schoolers statewide are too grim not to act.

Proponents of Measure 98, among them former Gov. Ted Kulongoski, cite short-term pilot projects in recent years that show bolstered efforts by schools at student retention and technical training to re-engage students who otherwise would slip away from school. That, among other things, makes the promise — and comparatively low price — of Measure 98 compelling. Voters should accept the risk as low and say yes.

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OTHER VIEWS

Bill the Columbus Dispatch
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Who’s sorry now? The country

I don’t know about you, but I’m totally exhausted by the public’s obsession with the vice-presidential debate. Everywhere I go, people are babbling about Mike Pence and Tim Kaine! Who knew it would be so electric? The world can’t stop talking about Veep Vitriole.

OK, I made that up. I’m sorry. Nobody is talking about the vice-presidential debate at all. This was really just a sneaky way to introduce the subject of apologies.

It came up in the debate, during an argument over who had the most “insult-driven campaign.” Pence saw an opening to mention that Hillary Clinton had once described half of Donald Trump’s followers as a racist, sexist, homophobic “basket of deplorables.” Kaine retorted that at least Clinton had apologized.

Which is true. Clinton said she regretted being “grossly generalistic, and that’s never a good idea.” It would have worked if she had not prefaced her original “deplorables” remark — made at a private fundraising event — with, “To just be grossly generalistic ...”

You can’t say you’re sorry for something you admitted was wrong when you were saying it. Clinton needs new material. A truly sincere apology would probably have been something along the lines of: “I deeply regret having said something at an off-the-record fundraiser that I wouldn’t want taped and broadcast to the world. You’d think everybody would have learned that lesson by now.”

Still, certainly not the worst apology of the era. That might have been the time a radical rebel group in Syria put up a statement expressing regret for having beheaded the wrong person.

Also, possibly former Cincinnati Reds star Pete Rose’s ongoing attempt to apologize for his seamy past by selling balls on which he’d written “I’m sorry I bet on baseball” for \$300 and up.

(Cincinnati still has a downtown street called Pete Rose Way, which illustrates the importance of not naming major pieces of infrastructure after people who are still alive. I always found it amusing until I ran across New York’s Donald J. Trump State Park.)

But about apologies: Other rules include not blaming the problem on the hearer (“I’m sorry if you guys were offended”). And not using your apology to repeat the original infraction. Perhaps you remember the former owner of the Los Angeles Clippers, who apologized for making racist statements about Magic Johnson in an interview during which he told Anderson Cooper “some of the African-Americans, they don’t want to help anybody.”

We need a president who will know just the right thing to say if our drones accidentally hit somebody’s presidential palace, or the



GAIL COLLINS
Comment

You can’t say you’re sorry for something you admitted was wrong when you were saying it.

new ambassador to France gets drunk and demands to know why Parisians aren’t friendly. Clinton’s own apology record is mixed, although lately her comments on the emails have been sounding less like expressions of regret for having been caught.

On this point, like so very many in the current campaign, Clinton’s failings tend to vanish when compared with the behavior of her opponent. If you’re having an argument about

who does an apology better, it’s not much of a contest when one of the two parties doesn’t seem to ever admit he was wrong about anything.

A Trumpian apology would be the thing he did recently in Washington, when he retracted years of birtherism by blurring out “President Barack Obama was born in the United States. Period.” Then trying

to claim he had done the president a favor by pushing the matter so hard. Then blaming the whole thing on Hillary at the end of a promo for his new hotel.

People, we are being deprived of our God-given right to complain about both presidential candidates. Every time someone comes up with a Hillary flaw, someone else will do a comparison. Yeah, while Clinton was secretary of state the Clinton Foundation took money from foreign bigwigs to help fund its work with impoverished people overseas. But the other guy spent his charity’s money on a 6-foot portrait of himself. Any more questions?

For Trump surrogates like Pence, the best response is to deny the original offense ever occurred. During the debate, Kaine pointed out that Trump had said women who seek an abortion should be punished. Hard to deny, given the fact that he made the comment on MSNBC. But Pence said Trump “would never support legislation” along that line.

And it’s true that hours after the MSNBC taping, the Trump campaign issued a statement saying he only wanted to punish doctors, and adding a comment from The Man himself: “My position has not changed — like Ronald Reagan, I am pro-life with exceptions.”

We have here the perfect encapsulation of the current Republican presidential campaign:

- 1) Trump says something very strange.
- 2) The campaign says he didn’t really say it.
- 3) Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan.

Pence, cornered by Kaine, finally blurted out, “Look, he’s not a polished politician like you and Hillary Clinton.”

Well, that would be one way of putting it.

Gail Collins joined The New York Times in 1995 as a member of the editorial board and later as an Op-Ed columnist.

YOUR VIEWS

Lehnert will be a responsive and active sheriff

Ryan Lehnert has my 100 percent support and I want you to know why I am supporting him.

First the personal: Ryan is an honest man who wants to make a difference. He is genuinely concerned with helping Umatilla county residents. He has a huge heart and passion for helping others. I have had the honor to know Ryan and his family and I have to say he sets the bar pretty high when it comes to being a father, friend and a law enforcement officer.

Next the professional: Ryan will be a responsive and active sheriff. Have any of you applied to get your concealed handgun license through Umatilla County? If not, plan on waiting months for your appointment. This is obviously a very small piece to the job, but it’s always the little things that make the difference.

Politics can be so ugly and I am proud of Ryan for running a clean campaign and not throwing mud like his opponent. It’s refreshing to know someone who won’t sink

to that level, takes responsibility and is not afraid to face life head on. Please join me in voting for Ryan Lehnert as our sheriff.

Jerod Broadfoot
Pendleton

Could old depot igloos be used as a homeless shelter?

With the closing of Corps of Engineers parks for the season and the homeless situation, is there any possibility of using the abandoned storage igloos at the old Army Depot?

This might be a short-term solution to house these people for the cold weather coming. There would be some expense to supply sanitation but could be better than what we’re experiencing right now. Plus they would be out of the public view, eliminating the eyesore in the community.

It would take a lot of work on their part to make it work, but, there should be some responsible individuals in their community that could do it.

Ray Anderson
Hermiston

LETTERS POLICY

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